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WORLD CONFERENCE AGAINST RACISM,
RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, XENOPHOBIA
AND RELATED INTOLERANCE
Preparatory Committee
First session
Geneva, 1 - 5 May 2000
Item 7 of the provisional agenda

REPORTS, STUDIES AND OTHER DOCUMENTATION FOR THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE AND THE WORLD CONFERENCE

Contribution*/ submitted by the International Council of AIDS Service Organizations

The Secretary-General has received the following contribution which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[4 February 2000]

*/ This contribution is issued unedited, as received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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In December 1999, UNAIDS reported that over 33 million people were living with HIV infection, while a further 16 million people had died of AIDS-related causes since the beginning of the epidemic. The overwhelming majority of people with HIV – about 95% - live in the developing world. Of those newly infected in developed countries, an increasing number belong to racial and ethnic minorities within those countries.

The full extent of the links between racial discrimination and the HIV/AIDS epidemic have yet to be explored. At the national level, people from racial and ethnic minorities who experience social and economic disadvantage and discrimination may also experience increased vulnerability to HIV infection. Once infected, they may have greater difficulty in accessing health care, treatment and support and may be more likely to be refused employment, accommodation, or health care.

At the international level, the burden of new infections and AIDS has now shifted to the developing world – sub-Saharan Africa now has close to 70% of the world's people with HIV infection. About 14 million Africans have already died of AIDS. Yet current and future medications and even candidate vaccines are largely designed and priced for developed world markets.

The International Council of AIDS Service Organizations calls on the Preparatory Committee to place the issue of HIV/AIDS and racial discrimination on the agenda of the World Conference Against Racism and to commission a study into the links between racial discrimination and HIV/AIDS. In particular, this study should:

i) define the links between racial discrimination and the HIV/AIDS epidemic at the national and international levels,
ii) make recommendations for States, including the introduction of legislation to directly or indirectly prohibit HIV-related discrimination, as set out in the International Guidelines on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights,
iii) make recommendations for States, specialized agencies and programmes, non-governmental organizations and trans-national corporations to take urgent action to address the HIV/AIDS epidemic at the national, regional and global levels, including the provision of technical and financial assistance to countries and communities in greatest need.